



**Media Contact:**

Crescent Gallagher  
Communications Director  
304-380-3922  
[cgallagher@wvda.us](mailto:cgallagher@wvda.us)

November 7, 2019

---

## WVDA Confirms Spotted Lanternfly Presence

---

**Charleston W.Va.** -- The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) has confirmed the presence of a new, invasive insect, the Spotted Lanternfly (*Lycormia delicatula*), in West Virginia. A small population of Spotted Lanternfly was detected in the Bunker Hill area of Berkeley County on October 30. The United States Department of Agriculture – Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service confirmed the findings.

“We have been surveying for this invasive pest for the past two years. We knew it was only a matter of time until the Spotted Lanternfly made it to our state,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. “The next step is to ask for formal assistance from our federal and state partners to put together an action plan to combat this pest.”

The Spotted Lanternfly is an invasive plant hopper that is native to China and likely arrived in North America hidden on goods imported from Asia. Juvenile spotted lanternflies, known as nymphs, and adults prefer to feed on the invasive tree known as Tree-of-Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), but also feed on a wide range of crops and plants, including, grapes, apples, hops, walnuts and hardwood trees.

“Our main concern is protecting the orchards and wineries in the Eastern Panhandle. Without proper management, the Spotted Lanternfly could have a devastating impact on these industries. We must act swiftly if we are to diminish their impact,” Leonhardt said.

Treatments will be conducted for the Spotted Lanternfly in the spring of 2020 in cooperation with USDA-APHIS, if needed. The WVDA is encouraging landowners to inspect their property for eggs masses, especially on properties that contain numerous Tree-of-Heaven.

-more-



For more information or to report potential Spotted Lanternfly sightings, contact [bugbusters@wvda.us](mailto:bugbusters@wvda.us) or 304-788-1066.

*The West Virginia Department of Agriculture protects plant, animal and human health through a variety of scientific, regulatory and consumer protection programs. The Commissioner of Agriculture is one of six statewide elected officials who sits on the Board of Public Works.*

###

